

# Transit-Oriented Communities Study Framework

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**PALM BEACH**  
Metropolitan Planning  
Organization

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## INTRODUCTION

The Palm Beach Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) 561 Plan provides the foundation for Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) in Palm Beach County.

The TPA's 561 Plan consists of five (5) north-south and six (6) east-west enhanced transit corridors, connecting one (1) county - Palm Beach County - to the rest of Southeast Florida. The corridors were initially identified in the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and chosen based on the analysis of population density, transit propensity, and transit ridership. The 2050 LRTP expanded the 561 Plan to include express bus concepts and Mobility on Demand (MOD) zones in concert with Palm Tran. The MPO is studying these corridors to select desired multimodal concepts and collaborate with roadway owners and transit operators to prioritize, fund, and implement these improvements.

This TOC framework was developed as the first step in identifying both opportunities and challenges for the implementation of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) along the 561 Plan corridors and around 561 Plan station areas. TOCs are necessary to plan for expected growth, which is constrained by the County's location between agricultural lands and the Everglades in the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. Compact, walkable, mixed-use development efficiently supports growth while preserving community character and enhancing transportation access.



# TRANSIT ORIENTED COMMUNITIES

## TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)

TOD is development that encourages the use of public transit in urban environments by centering compact, mixed-use development around premium transit service.

## TRANSIT ORIENTED COMMUNITIES (TOC)

TOC expands on core TOD principles, such as multimodal access, mixed-use development, walkability, and integrated land use and transportation. Unlike TOD, TOC extends these benefits beyond immediate station areas to existing neighborhoods, creating more complete, adaptable, and sustainable communities.

## TRANSIT ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT (TAD)

TADs are located near transit facilities, but unlike TOC and TOD, they lack true integration between development and transit access.

## KEY TOC CONSIDERATIONS

All trips begin on foot, and the built environment directly influences comfort and desirability to walk, which is reflected in car dependency in communities all across the country. TOCs can lessen car dependency and promote walkability by encouraging compact, mixed-use development that is pedestrian-oriented and transit-focused. TOC considerations are detailed below.

URBAN FORM	COMPLETE STREETS	MOBILITY HUB
Major cities see the highest transit ridership due to their dense mix of residential, commercial, and recreational spaces, offering broad accessibility to a variety of transportation options. These compact, mixed-use neighborhoods encourage people to live, work, and play locally, maximizing the value and efficiency of transit investments.	TOCs emphasize maximum accessibility to destinations, land uses, and activities through walking and alternative modes. TOC development prioritizes pedestrian and cyclist safety, convenience, and comfort with well-designed sidewalks, bike lanes, and micromobility options.	TOCs near major transit facilities feature strong ridership, community desirability, dense development, high land values, and support for transit expansion. TOCs focus development within a half-mile walk of transit stops, served by frequent, high-capacity modes like circulators, buses, and rail that rival car travel.



## CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

The Connected Communities Concept brings daily needs within a short walk, bike ride, or transit trip to reduce car use and boost healthy, sustainable living.

## THE 5 D'S

The 5 D's is a planning framework that can be used to evaluate and guide the creation of vibrant, walkable, and transit-friendly communities. Collectively, the 5 D's inform the 3 TOC components of urban form, complete streets, and mobility hubs:



### DENSITY

The level of development intensity, including population, housing, and employment, within a given area that reflects local needs. Higher densities generally encourage more transit use by reducing the need for car trips and increasing the frequency of transit services.



### DIVERSITY OF LAND USES

The mix of land uses such as residential, commercial, and recreational spaces within a neighborhood. A diverse mix of uses provides more opportunities for people to walk, bike, and use transit, reducing the need for car trips.



### DESIGN

The physical characteristics of the street network, including street connectivity, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and quality of the public realm. A well-designed neighborhood with good connectivity and amenities encourages walking and biking, making transit more accessible.



### DESTINATION ACCESSIBILITY

The ease with which people can reach destinations such as work, shops, and recreational facilities, by various modes of transportation. Higher destination accessibility reduces the need for car trips and encourages transit use.



### DISTANCE OF TRANSIT

The proximity of homes, workplaces, and other destinations to transit stops and stations. Shorter distances to transit increase the likelihood of people choosing transit over driving.

# CONTEXT AND CHARACTER

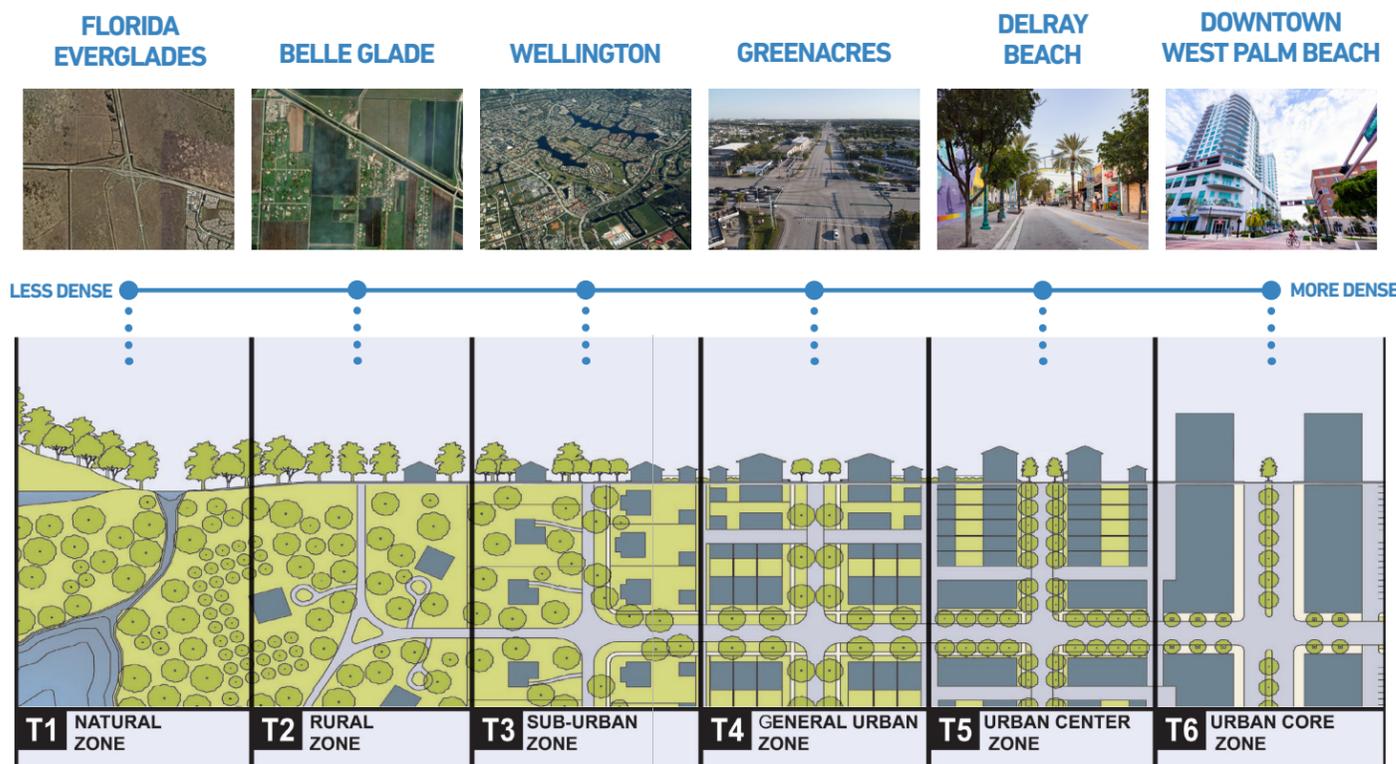
Community context and character are primarily influenced by land use, transportation, and natural features. The relationship of buildings to the street (in terms of ratio of building height to street width, setbacks, and in ground-floor uses) influence the built environment.

TOC aims to create a compact, diverse, and walkable development form characterized by mixed-use development and a well-connected multimodal transportation network. While the design principles are consistent, TOC scale and characteristics can be responsive to local contexts and needs.

Development patterns vary across a spectrum from natural and rural to dense and urban following a concept called the "Transect".

TOC is typically thought of as the most urban end of the transect, where it may take the form of very high-density, mixed-use development with minimal setbacks and parking, active ground-floor uses, and a connected multimodal network. The emphasis is on vertical growth, walkability, and strong integration with premium transit.

TOC form varies across the Transect from urban to suburban. Density decreases, building heights lower, and setbacks are slightly larger to integrate with existing neighborhood character. While walkable, mixed-use is still a goal, the scale and intensity of uses are reduced. The street network remains pedestrian-oriented, but may also accommodate on-street parking or a wider roadway to transition to surrounding areas.



# STAKEHOLDER AND WORKSHOP FEEDBACK



Community Workshop.



Community Workshop.



Community Workshop.

A public workshop and various stakeholder meetings were facilitated to further refine the TOC station typologies and understand where policy and planning strategies are needed to bring the identified 561 Plan corridors and station area up to the development character defined by their respective typologies.

Feedback gathered from the workshop and stakeholder meetings was used to formalize the TOC Framework presented on page 10. Key themes that emerged from these discussions include the importance of a place-based planning framework, a defined vision for the TOCs, and the consideration of critical infrastructure improvements. Clearly defining what a TOC is will help guide future policies and provide a vision for development.

## STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to the workshop, the following stakeholders were interviewed and their feedback was considered in the development of the TOC Framework:

- Tri-Rail
- Palm Tran
- Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
- Palm Beach County
- City of West Palm Beach
- City of Palm Beach Gardens
- City of Boca Raton
- Village of Wellington

# TOC TYPOLOGIES

Palm Beach County's diverse geography calls for a context-sensitive approach to TOC implementation. The 561 Plan identified key transit corridors and station area locations. The station typologies were created as part of previous MPO efforts in collaboration with the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC), reflecting the scale, character and context of the communities along the 561 Plan corridors.



## CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The Central Business District typology has the highest density with a mixture of land uses including office, retail and multi-family residential. This typology is generally located in downtown and is seen as a regional destination.



Central Business District Example.

## DISTRICT/TOWN CENTER

The District/Town Center typology has medium density with mixed land-uses, including retail, small offices, single-family and multi-family residential. This typology is generally located in urban areas and creates vital nodes for interaction and development.



District/Town Center Example.

## URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

The Urban Neighborhood typology includes compact multimodal focused nodes with moderate to high density residential and urban commercial uses. This typology is generally located east of I-95 and includes higher density uses along corridors with strong pedestrian connections to surrounding neighborhoods.



Urban Neighborhood Example.

## COMMERCIAL CENTER

The Commercial Center typology is situated near major arterials and may serve as park and ride facilities for adjacent commercial and residential development. This typology has a suburban commercial mix of uses and includes a mix of single family and multi-family housing types.



Commercial Center Example.

## NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUTER

The Neighborhood Commuter typology may include compact multimodal focused nodes with land uses such as suburban commercial and single family. The typology facilitates connectivity between the neighborhoods to destinations, employment hubs, and urban centers by providing walkable stations closer to existing communities.



Neighborhood Commuter Example.

## REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT/SPECIAL DISTRICT

Regional Employment/Special Districts are situated adjacent to multimodal facilities and serve moderately dense commercial, retail and employment hubs. These areas have attracting uses or destinations that serve as entertainment, areas of community, and regional congregation.



Regional Employment/Special District Example.

# TOC FRAMEWORK

	KEY ELEMENTS	CONSIDERATIONS	CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT	DISTRICT/TOWN CENTER	URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS	COMMERCIAL CENTER	NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUTER	REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT / SPECIAL DISTRICT
URBAN FORM	Zoning and Density	Density and intensity, building height, lot coverage, setbacks, and parking considerations	High-rise buildings with street frontage that abuts the public realm. Considerations for building height step ups from the public realm to create a canyon effect/maintain a pedestrian scale.	High to medium-rise buildings with street frontage that abuts the public realm. Considerations for building height steps from the public realm to create a canyon effect/maintain a pedestrian scale.	Medium to low-rise buildings with minimal setbacks from the street. Considerations for medium-rise and medium-density in proximity to mobility hubs, with	Medium to low-rise buildings with moderate setbacks from the street.	Low rise buildings with moderate setbacks from the street.	Medium to high-rise buildings, with minimal setbacks from the street.
	Land Use	Mix and ratio of land uses	A mix of land uses including employment centers, government and civic uses, as well as retail and residential. Residential should be high-density and medium-density residential with incentives for affordable and workforce housing.	A mix of land uses including office, retail, government and civic uses, as well as industrial where appropriate. Residential should be high-density and medium-density residential with incentives for affordable and workforce housing.	A mix of residential, retail, small-scale office, institutional, and recreational space. Residential should be medium-density with incentives for affordable and workforce housing.	Largely commercial, retail, and office uses, with some residential.	Largely low to medium-density residential with supporting neighborhood scale retail, commercial, and recreational uses. Consideration for affordable and workforce housing incentives.	A mix of land uses including office, retail, government and civic uses, as well as industrial and special event space where appropriate. Serves as a regional employment area or regional activity generator. Residential should be high-density and medium-density with incentives for affordable and workforce housing.
COMPLETE STREETS	Design	Corridor considerations for context classification, multimodal accommodations, parking accommodations, and open space.	Minimum 6-foot sidewalks that abut building frontages for an active public realm. Streetscapes to include shade elements and pedestrian scale lighting. Protected on-street and separated bicycle accommodations. Parking accommodates on-street and in structured parking. Open space inclusive of plazas, pocket parks, and hardscapes.	Minimum 6-foot sidewalks that abut building frontages for an active public realm. Streetscapes to include shade elements and pedestrian scale lighting. Protected on-street and separated bicycle accommodations. Parking accommodations on-street and in structured parking. Open space inclusive of plazas, pocket parks, and hardscapes, as well as event space.	Minimum 6-foot sidewalks with minimum setbacks from the street. Public realm space to include outdoor dining and furnishing space, amenities, and pedestrian scale lighting. Shared multimodal facilities and paths, as well as on-street bicycle lanes where appropriate. Open space inclusive of linear parks, neighborhood parks, and community centers.	Minimum 6-foot sidewalks with moderate setbacks from the street. Public realm should accommodate shade elements, lighting, and hardscaping. Buffered and protected on-street bicycle lanes. Parking accommodations on street, off-street surface parking, and structure parking. Considerations for shared parking and surface parking prohibited from building frontages.	Minimum 6-foot sidewalks with minimal to moderate setbacks. Public realm should accommodate shade elements, lighting, and amenities. Bicycle accommodations on-street in dedicated lanes or shared lanes, may also include neighborhood greenways. Parking accommodates on-street and off-street in surface lots with considerations for shared parking. Open space inclusive of neighborhood parks, linear parks, and regional parks.	Minimum 6-foot sidewalks with minimal setbacks. Public realm should accommodate shade elements, lighting, amenities, and hardscaping. Bicycle accommodations on-street in protected lanes or shared use paths. Parking accommodations off-street in surface lots with considerations for shared parking and structure parking in central locations. Open space inclusive of urban parks, parklets, and community parks.
	Destination Accessibility	Considerations for block length, intersection stop control, driveway access and spacing, and mid-block crossings.	Grid street network with smaller block sizes, restricted driveway access from frontages. Considerations for stop control at intersections and signalization where appropriate.	Grid street network with smaller block sizes, restricted driveway access from frontages. Considerations for stop control at intersections and signalization where appropriate. Allow for mid-block crossings on longer block lengths.	Grid street network with varying block sizes, driveway access from frontage allowed but limited. Considerations for stop control at intersections and signalization where appropriate. Mid-block crossings implemented on longer block lengths.	Grid street pattern with varying moderate block lengths with moderate driveway spacing. Considerations for signalization at intersections with mid-block crossings on longer blocks.	Grid street pattern with varying moderate block lengths with moderate driveway spacing. Considerations for signalization at intersections with mid-block crossings on longer blocks.	Grid street network with smaller block sizes, restricted driveway access from frontages. Considerations for stop control at intersections and signalization where appropriate. Allow for mid-block crossings on longer block lengths.
	Development Constraints	Considerations for multimodal network gaps and presence of high speed, high volume corridors.	Elimination of gaps in the sidewalk and bicycle network. Maintain some high speed and high volume corridors.	Elimination of gaps in the sidewalk and bicycle network. Maintain some high speed and high volume corridors.	Reduction of gaps in the sidewalk and bicycle network. Reduce presence of high speed and high volume corridors.	Elimination of gaps in the sidewalk and bicycle network. Maintain some high speed and high volume corridors.	Elimination of gaps in the sidewalk and bicycle network. Eliminate presence of high speed and high volume corridors.	Elimination of gaps in the sidewalk and bicycle network. Reduce presence of high speed and high volume corridors.
MOBILITY HUBS	Destination Accessibility	Considerations for multimodal activity levels, supporting micromobility options, as well as parking and curb demand strategies.	High pedestrian and bicycle activity, dedicated multimodal facilities, curb management and accommodations for rideshare and micromobility zones.	High pedestrian and bicycle activity, dedicated multimodal facilities, curb management and accommodations for rideshare and micromobility zones. Considerations for shared parking and central parking locations in the district.	Moderate pedestrian and bicycle activity, shared and dedicated multimodal facilities on main streets and corridors. On-street parking accommodations and centralized shared parking options.	High pedestrian and bicycle activity, dedicated multimodal facilities, curb management and accommodations for rideshare and micromobility zones. Considerations for shared parking and central parking locations in the district.	Moderate pedestrian and bicycle activity, shared and dedicated multimodal facilities on key corridors.	High pedestrian and bicycle activity, dedicated multimodal facilities, curb management and accommodations for rideshare and micromobility zones. Considerations for shared parking and central parking locations in the district.
	Transit Frequency	Considerations for the transit service types, level of service (frequency), and intermodal connectivity.	High intermodal connectivity at mobility hubs that serve as key transfer points for regional and local service with premium, high capacity transit connections.	High intermodal connectivity at mobility hubs that serve as key transfer points for regional and local service with premium, high capacity transit connections. On-street transfer locations between services should also be considered.	Moderate intermodal connectivity at transit stops and stations. Presence of micromobility options to support first/last mile connections to local and premium transit service.	High intermodal connectivity at mobility hubs that serve as key transfer points for regional and local service with premium, high capacity transit connections. On-street transfer locations between services should also be considered.	Moderate intermodal connectivity at mobility hubs that serve as key transfer points for regional and local service with premium, high capacity transit connections. Micromobility options to facilitate first/last mile connections to transit service.	High intermodal connectivity at mobility hubs that serve as key transfer points for regional and local service with premium, high capacity transit connections. Preference for light-rail and passenger rail connections.

# TOC IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

## URBAN FORM

### ZONING AND DENSITY



#### Upzoning Station Areas

Allow for higher densities and a mix of uses within 561 Plan station areas.

#### Form-Base Codes

Define the built form, public realm, and multimodal experience in station areas.

#### Overlays and Activity Centers

Tailor land use and zoning regulations in station areas that support and encourage compact, walkable development.

### LAND USE



#### Inclusionary Zoning

Require a percentage of residential uses to be affordable and/or workforce housing.

#### Anti-Displacement Measures

Limit displacement impacts as TOC occurs in station areas.

#### Bonus Density

Incentivize development of affordable and workforce housing in station areas and along TOC corridors.

## MOBILITY HUBS

### DESTINATION ACCESSIBILITY



#### Transportation Master Planning

Define an integrated, multimodal transportation plan in stations that provides predictability for developers and the community.

#### Phased Implementation

Prioritize multimodal improvements in station areas that align with TOC typologies and complete connections in the network.

### TRANSIT FREQUENCY AND SERVICE



#### Agency Coordination

Align land use and transportation policies with transit service provisions in TOC station areas.

#### Transportation Disadvantaged Service

Integrate Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) policies and strategies with TOCs to enhance accessibility for those who face barriers to transportation.

## COMPLETE STREETS

### DESIGN



#### Modify Parking Requirements

Change the standards for minimum parking accommodations in zoning to account for and encourage a range of trips, preferably transit oriented.

#### Multimodal Level of Service

Define and establish multimodal transportation metrics in station areas and along corridors in alignment with Complete Streets Design Guidelines, as well as evaluate transportation impacts from development in TOCs.

### DESTINATION ACCESSIBILITY AND DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS



#### Multimodal Impact Fees

Consider revisions to fee structure that would allow for greater multimodal investments.

#### Complete Streets Standards

Determine multimodal facilities standards in station areas and along corridors that align with Complete Streets Design Guidelines.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### PROCESS AND POLICY



#### Expedited Permitting Process

Provide an expedited permitting process for development that incorporates, aligns with, and implements TOC in station areas.

#### Predictable Development Process

Establish a predictable development review process for projects that meet set criteria for TOC in station areas and along 561 corridors.

#### Fee Reductions

Reduce the cost of development and permitting fees for developments and projects in TOC station areas that meet set criteria.

### DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT AND CONSTRAINTS



#### Public-Private Partnerships

Collaborate with the developers on TOC implementation and funding.

#### Agency Coordination

Determine a systematic programming for TOC and implement similar development standards for TOC station area typologies across multiple jurisdictions.

#### Monitor and Evaluate

Define Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for evaluating TOC implementation progress and determine adaptations to policies, programs, and processes.

# NEXT STEPS

The TOC Framework presented in this document provides a foundational first step for strategizing TOC implementation in 561 Plan station areas and along 561 Plan corridors. The framework defines land use and transportation guidelines for 561 Plan typologies that promote mixed-use, multimodal transit supportive development that is scalable to community contexts across Palm Beach County. General TOC implementation strategies have been identified as part of the TOC Framework. These strategies will be further refined and tailored to jurisdictions with 561 Plan station areas and corridors in the next phase of the TOC Framework. Key next steps include:



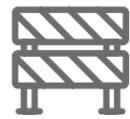
## POLICY AND REGULATORY UPDATES

Local government policies and regulations will be evaluated to identify necessary, specific updates to support TOC principles in alignment with community goals and character.



## BETA TESTING OF SAMPLE POLICIES

A sample set of municipal policies, aligned with the TOC framework and station area typologies, will be modeled to visualize how they support mixed-use, multimodal, and inclusive development.



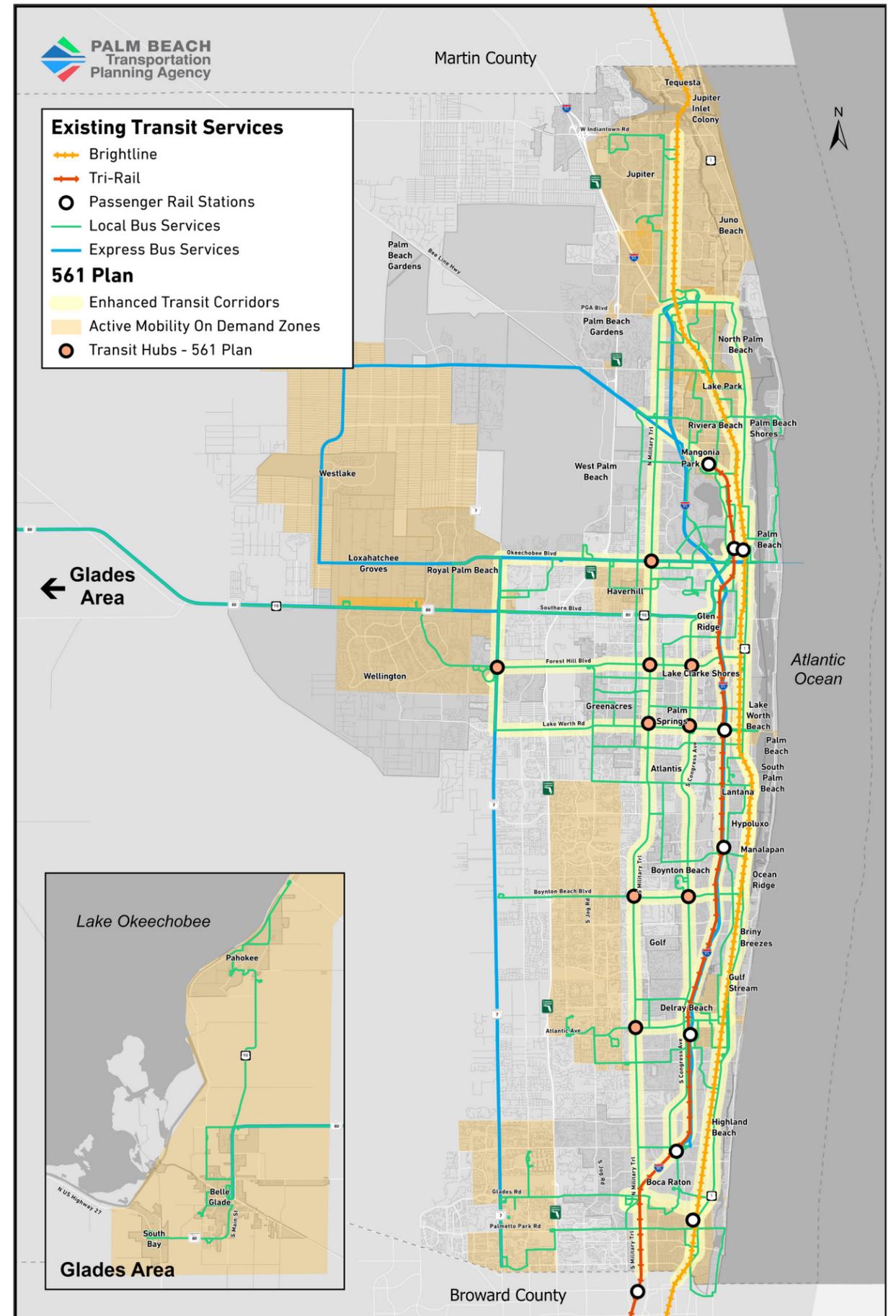
## BARRIER ASSESSMENT

The process will include identifying regulatory barriers to redevelopment, especially those affecting transit-oriented design, affordable housing, and multimodal accessibility.



## GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL UPDATES

The refined framework will offer tailored recommendations for updating local policies and regulations. These will address key elements such as density, land use mix, building form, and transportation connectivity to better support TOC development and redevelopment.





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